

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2406

As Passed House:
February 16, 2004

Title: An act relating to teaching Washington's tribal history and culture.

Brief Description: Requiring tribal history and culture curriculum.

Sponsors: By Representatives McCoy, Rockefeller, Conway, McDermott, Sullivan, Ormsby, Fromhold, Hunt, Lovick, Cooper, Haigh, Anderson, Kenney, Santos, Darneille, Chase, Moeller and Lantz.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/26/04, 2/5/04 [DPS];

Appropriations: 2/9/04 [DP2S(w/o sub ED)].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/16/04, 82-12.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to develop a model curriculum for Pacific Northwest Indian tribal history and a model tribal outreach program.
- Encourages school districts to adopt the model curriculum and to supplement it with outreach and cultural exchange with local tribes.
- Requires school boards to report annually to the SPI's Office of Indian Education on the district's communications and activities with local Indian tribes.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; McDermott, Vice Chair; Haigh, Hunter, Rockefeller and Santos.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Tom, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Cox and McMahan.

Staff: Sydney Forrester (786-7120).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass and do not pass the substitute bill by Committee on Education. Signed by 27 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Sehlin, Ranking Minority Member; Pearson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Anderson, Boldt, Buck, Chandler, Clements, Cody, Conway, Cox, Dunshee, Grant, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McDonald, McIntire, Miloscia, Ruderman, Schual-Berke, Sump and Talcott.

Staff: Denise Graham (786-7137).

Background:

Washington has a rich Native American heritage that dates back thousands of years. There currently are 29 federally-recognized Indian tribes whose reservations are located in Washington. Many Northwest Indians still observe the traditions of their ancient ancestors. Washington's high school graduation requirements include a minimum of one-half credit of course work in Washington history and government. Courses designed to meet this requirement are encouraged to include information on the culture, history, and government of the American Indians who were the first inhabitants of Washington.

Summary of Bill:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) must develop a model curriculum for incorporating Washington's tribal history in existing school district-level history and social studies courses. The SPI must collaborate with social studies teachers and tribal education and cultural specialists and must make the curriculum available to school districts.

School districts are required to collaborate with the tribal government of the federally-recognized Indian tribe whose reservation lands or traditional lands and territories are nearest the school district, and are encouraged to supplement the model curriculum developed by SPI with cultural exchange opportunities. The SPI offices of Indian Education and Social Studies are directed to assist districts in determining the locations of reservation lands and traditional lands and territories.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (Education) Students who feel left out of the school culture, or not respected in the school system, want to drop out and sometimes do. It doesn't just affect Native American students when they don't see themselves represented in the school. It also affects non-Indian students who later wonder why they were not taught the history of Washington's tribes.

This proposal builds a bridge between the schools and tribes. It can be a catalyst for social change and will encourage students to work toward increased cultural awareness. The SPI Office of Indian Education already has developed some information for teaching tribal history and culture. The curriculum is aligned with the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) and includes parent and community involvement components. If the state really wants to leave no Indian child behind, the state should allow schools and tribes to work together.

Testimony For: (Appropriations) Worked closely with Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to keep costs down and to provide the rich cultural and historical heritage of Washington tribes to schools.

Testimony Against: (Education) None.

Testimony Against: (Appropriations) None.

Persons Testifying: (Education) (In Support) Representative McCoy, prime sponsor; Martina Whelshula, First Peoples Language; Dawn Vyvyan, Yakima Nation; Marsha Wynecoop, First Peoples Language and Culture Committee; Denny Hurtado, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Larry Davis, State Board of Education.

Persons Testifying: (Appropriations) (In support) Representative McCoy, prime sponsor; and Greg Williamson, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (Education) Alton McDonald, National Action Network.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (Appropriations) None.